exports and policies to strengthen Special Economic Zones (SEZs), a new programme called "Focus CIS" has been introduced. Thus, measures are being taken from time to time to increase India's exports.

Indo-EU Free Trade Agreement

1940. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry has suggested setting up of a joint study group to look into the feasibility of Free Trade Agreement between India and the European Union;

(b) whether this move is aimed at enhancing and deepening India's trade relations with the EU;

(c) if so, whether any concrete agreement in this regard has been reached; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when a final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) It is learnt from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) that in a recent press release it has stated that in order to enhance and deepen India's trade relations with the European Union, it is in favour of setting up of a joint study group to look into the feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement between the two sides.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Trade pact with Singapore

1941. DR T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chambers of Commerce and Industry have urged Government to have an early trade pact with Singapore;

(b) whether a two day summit was organised by the Singapore Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in association with the Mumbai based Indian Merchant's Chamber;

(c) if so, whether India and Singapore have signed a trade agreement; and

(d) if so, what are their aims and objects and to what extent this would be helpful for both?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Indian Merchant's Chamber, Mumbai had in association with Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry organised 'India Calling Asia-Pacific Business Summit' in Singapore from 9-10th July, 2004 with the objective of harnessing business opportunities not only in India but in the Asia Pacific Region and to look at investment potential of overseas Indians and foreign investors. While there has not been any specific proposal from the Chamber of Commerce & Industry for having an early trade pact with Singapore, the summary of the proceedings makes a mention of a recommendation to expedite signing of a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement for the mutual benefit of India and Singapore.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The question does not arise.

Trade ties with Israel

1942. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and 16 other organisations have urged Government to improve trade links with Israel;

(b) if so, the trade between India and Israel between 2002-03;

(c) to what extent the FICCI wants to further increase it;